

the Under Secretary for Food Nutrition and Consumer Services, the Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics, the Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, USDA General Counsel, the USDA Inspector General and the Director of the Office of Communication.

During the past year, FERRET has met whenever levels of contaminants pose a threat to human health and safety. In just one year, FERRET has dramatically increased the pace at which USDA responds to public health problems. The new team ensures a swift response by USDA to contamination and provides a greater assurance to American consumers that their food is safe.

I am proud of the very positive accomplishments achieved by FERRET in just one year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their efforts. I look forward to working with FERRET on future food safety efforts.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, June 23, 1999.

Hon. DEBBIE STABENOW,
House of Representatives,
Longworth HOB, Washington, DC.

DEAR DEBBIE: One year ago, President Clinton signed the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 into law (Pub. L. 105-185). On this anniversary, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your important contributions to this bill in the area of food safety.

A significant amount of debate on the bill focused on food safety concerns. Your input, based on the expertise of Michigan State University and the National Center for Food Safety and Toxicology research in your district, contributed significantly to the debate. I would particularly like to thank you for your contribution regarding the Food Safety Crisis Management Team.

Last year, you introduced the Safe Food Action Plan (H.R. 3148) to create a Food Safety Rapid Response team, at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), to respond to food safety disasters. Your bill helped focus the Committee's attention on this issue, resulting in the inclusion of a similar crisis management team in the final version of the Agriculture Research bill.

Through your efforts, the USDA has created the Food Emergency Rapid Response and Evaluation Team (FERRET). During the past year, the team has met whenever levels of contaminants in food threaten to pose a human health hazard. As you know, they have effectively handled a variety of problems ranging from arsenic in peanut butter to lead in baby food. This is an important tool for the USDA to have in the area of food safety.

Let me also thank you for your important contributions to the overall issue of food safety. I look forward to our continued friendship and to working together on the Agriculture Committee. With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,
CHARLES W. STENHOLM,
Ranking Member.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE HECTOR GODINEZ

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 1999

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute to a great man. We have lost Hector

Godinez to illness but his spirit will live on in Santa Ana.

Hector was born at the San Diego Mission in 1924. A year later, his family moved to Santa Ana and that became his home. Immediately after high school, he joined the military and served with distinction. The battles he fought in, including the invasion of France, led to the Allies' victory in Europe during World War II. He was revered for his service in General Patton's tank unit. His decorations include a bronze star and purple heart.

When Mr. Godinez came home from the war, he decided to continue his record of public service as a letter carrier. President Kennedy appointed him Postmaster of Santa Ana in 1960. His employment with the U.S. Postal Service spanned nearly half a century.

But I would do his memory a disservice if I neglected to mention the many other contributions Hector made to our community. As a founding member of the Santa Ana League of United Latin American Citizens, Mr. Godinez and his fellow activists are to be thanked for the landmark civil rights case *Mendez v. The Board of Education*, which safeguarded the Hispanic children of Orange County against discrimination in local schools.

Hector never stopped fighting, giving or learning. He held a number of degrees, including his Masters', which he received in 1980. His name will forever be associated with the long list of community organizations and boards on which he served.

He guided our citizens through decades of change in Southern California, both as a public servant and an activist. Our lives as Orange County residents are better for his life's work, and I salute him today.

IN MEMORY OF SUSAN YOACHUM

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 1999

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I called to the attention of our colleagues the wonderful life and courageous death of Susan Yoachum. No one could better memorialize our loss than Susan's husband Michael Carlson, whose statement I am commending to our colleagues today.

[From the San Francisco Chronicle, June 22, 1999]

GRACE IN THE FACE OF FEAR—SUSAN
YOACHUM MET HER DEATH FROM CANCER AS
A HERO

(By Michael Carlson)

It was a public event when my wife, Susan Yoachum, died of breast cancer a year ago today. As political editor of *The Chronicle* and as a television commenter, she had become a familiar name and face. Her funeral was covered on television, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown ordered city flags to fly at half-staff, and the White House sent a letter of condolence.

Susan's struggle with breast cancer had been no less public.

She had spoken and written movingly about her ordeal. She wanted to put a human face on a disease that is the No. 1 killer of American women ages 25-55. She hoped that by personalizing breast cancer, more might be done to prevent and cure it. And she wanted to spread the word that early detection—through monthly self-exams and regular

mammograms—can increase a woman's chance of survival.

My mourning was less public. And I was more private about my reaction to Susan's illness.

Recently, I decided to speak out about Susan and her fight with cancer at the invitation of The Breast Cancer Fund, a research, advocacy and patient-support charity that honored Susan at its annual "Heroes Tribute."

The idea of heroes and the nature of courage are topics that I have thought about a lot since Susan died.

The dictionary defines a hero as a person admired for their courage.

I admire Susan for the courage she showed in facing her own death. What she taught me about courage could be the first chapter of my own self-help book, "All I Need to Know About Living I Learned From How My Wife Chose to Die."

In addition to everything else she is and was to me, Susan is my personal hero.

She did not consider herself courageous and would have been bewildered at being called a hero.

She did not consider herself courageous and would have been bewildered at being called a hero. Two days after realizing her cancer had spread, Susan recorded a conversation with her sister-in-law in her journal: "Patti said last night that she told her friends that I was brave. It sounds so noble and grand that I loved the sound of it at once. Yet I don't feel brave." Susan told me she didn't feel brave because cancer and death scared her so much.

When she was first diagnosed with cancer in 1991, Susan wrote about her fear: "I have met younger women with breast cancer and older women with breast cancer. Some are mothers; some are grandmothers; some are executives; some are artists. They are black, white, Asian, Hispanic, rich, poor, bitter, hopeful—but there is one thing that all of us are, and that is sacred."

Susan was more blunt six years later when her cancer spread. "I'm scared out of my wits," she wrote in 1997. "It's the kind of fear that makes your blood run cold, the sort of fear that floods in when you lose sight of a child in a crowd."

Why do I call such a frightened person courageous?

Courage has nothing to do with being fearless.

"Usually we think that brave people have no fear. The truth is they are intimate with fear," writes Pema Chodron in "When Things Fall Apart." Courageous people are those who persevere in spite of and in the face of their deepest fears.

Susan was intimate with fear. Despite that, from 1991 and until her death in 1998, she lived her life with remarkable energy and spirit. She did more than just persevere. She celebrated life. She faced her illness by living as if each day was a gift. She believed that life was to be enjoyed today, now, before time ran out.

Susan enjoyed her life immensely and brought happiness to those around her. She fought for those things she thought important, including raising awareness about breast cancer. She continued to write about politics for as long as she could because she thought it was important and because it brought her joy. And Susan had fun. In her words, she inhaled life.

That took courage.

Although Susan did not consider herself courageous, she understood what she was doing and wrote about it: "How many times in therapy-kissed California have we heard that the only things we can control are our own responses to what befalls us?" Susan's response to her fear was "to make peace